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need for personal responsibility is stressed in these sayings: "No one is to blame. He is to blame himself"; "For a good man all goes well."[21] And when they quarrel they are not expected to become vindictive, but to forget and say "Words are like wind."[22]

These people are very fond of intoxicating drink which in their society seems to be a way to increase sociability and channel aggressiveness rather than a means of escape. They drink in groups, not alone, and then they sing and dance and appeal to Lada, who was the Goddess of Love in their heathen past. They tend to turn even sad and mournful events into occasions for merry-making and are inclined to minimize fear of death.[23]

II

Interpersonal relations and philosophy of life of the early Slav plowmen seem to have been projected into their supernatural world. According to the early beliefs of these people, the universe was governed by a great many deities, fairies and spirits. Most of these supernatural beings were pictured as benevolent, some mildly malevolent. They lived in families and had children. They could be found everywhere; in the house as well as in the lakes and rivers; they could be seen swinging from every plant and tree; or heard singing and handclapping in every barn and on every threshing floor. Until very recently, the Bielorussian peasant could see the sun dancing if he got up early in the morning on a certain day of the year.

The whole cosmic view of the early Slav agriculturist seems to have consisted of pantheism and animism. All nature was possessed of spirits that behaved like human beings. Human beings themselves were identified with nature, with animals and plants. This identification of man and nature found its expression, for instance, in personal names which were those of seasons and natural spectacles, of trees, flowers and fruits, birds and other animals. These semi-matriarchal plowmen also apparently practiced a special cult of Mother Earth and of Rozhanitsy—the female beings who presided over the birth and destiny of man. Sacrificial meals were offered to these fairy-like spirits, consisting of meatless dishes.[24] The sermons of the first Christian missionaries

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were directed not only against this cult, but also against that of the Fire and of the Sun.[25] There was no cult of war-gods in the mythology of the Old Slavs nor was there any epic poetry in their folklore.

Unlike the patriarchal, rigidly stratified and dualistic religious system of steppe nomads which was full of tensions and struggles, the supernatural world of the Slavs of Polesie was anarchic, equalitarian and peaceful. Apparently projecting their own social organization into the supernatural world, the Old-Slavonic plowmen conceived it as being composed of both sexes but without a hierarchy of power among themselves. The deities that inhabited that world were neither arbitrary nor corrupted, nor did they fight among themselves for the control over man. Festivals in their honor were celebrated with the accent on drink, song, dance and lovemaking.

Accordingly the Slavs of Polesie did not have to appease their deities nor try to be on good terms with both the bad and the good ones. They believed that after death bad and wicked people would roam the earth in the form of werewolves and vampires; but, they also possessed simple means of protection against these evil ghosts, such as pieces of torn clothes, which were accessible to everyone.[26] There were always persons of both sexes who maintained contact and control over the spirits of evil and were willing to help anyone in distress. Hence the Old Slavs trusted their wizards, the *veshchy*.[27]

According to the religious and social philosophy of the Slavs of the Dnieper, there are some general all-embracing rules of behavior to which all people, all the universe as well as all the deities, are subjected. In such a religious and philosophical system, the deities could not be capricious. They could be relied upon to behave according to commonly accepted rules of conduct and should not therefore be distrusted and feared. It is this optimistic view of destiny and of the universe, in which order and anarchic equity, not sword or might nor caprice prevail, that perhaps had found expression in the Old-Slavonic concept of law which was identified with truth and justice (*pravda*). The same view of life had perhaps found expression also in the Old-Slavonic concept of judgment which was identified with destiny

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(*sud*). Accordingly, in the mind of these people, the universe and peace (*mir*) were also identical.[28]

Great calamities occasionally befell the Old-Slavonic communities—frequent raids and plundering by the invaders and slave hunters; then cattle plagues and epidemics. These were thought to have been brought on by certain demons and malevolent ghosts, but the Polesie people knew of ways to cope even with such disasters. Contagious diseases were prevented or stopped by means of magic, especially by the magical powers of women. As for their enemies, the soil cultivators of the Dnieper basin were not prepared for any offensive or defensive warfare and were an easy prey for many aggressors. Being not armed, their defense consisted of hiding themselves. They sought safety in impenetrable marshes and forests and even resorted to such ruses as lying submerged on the bottoms of marshes and breathing by means of cane sticks until the danger was over.[29]

Since the Old-Slavonic agriculturists contracted their marriage unions early in life, as a means of labor supply and since they were not exposed to exhaustion of constant warfare, the region which they originally inhabited soon reached its limits of population. Thus, in spite of their autarchic and intensive agricultural techniques and their attachment to the soil, the early Slav folk were forced to leave their original habitat in search of new lands. They did not migrate in a fury and did not traverse great distances like the mounted nomads of the steppes; rather, they moved slowly and quietly for short distances and by stages always keeping in touch with the mother community from which they had sprung.

In this manner the Old-Slavonic tillers penetrated new regions and territories, not by force and conquest like the predatory steppe raiders, but by cultivating new soil along the river basins, in the midst of forest clearings, drained marshes or irrigated steppes. Living in village communities which remained ethnically uninterrupted, they transplanted and perpetuated in their new homes their native agricultural techniques, their beliefs and customs, their family and community organization, as well as their philosophy of life. Thus as late as the twentieth century, the social organization and personality traits of the Zadruga peo-

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attractive forest fairies who used to help travelers changed into beastly demons who trick wayfarers into making them lose their way and then cause them to perish.

The imposition of the rule of nomadic warriors over the soil cultivators brought about not only insecurity of life and property, but disintegration of the old ways of life and of the old morals. Social disintegration favored detachment from the group, caused decline in group identification and solidarity, tended to increase self-concern, fostered destructive aggressiveness and anti-social behavior. Hence, drunkenness, debauchery, orgiastic practices, together with robbing and killing, became prominent. According to Fedotov, the old Christian sermons are so full of invectives against such behavior that some studies of Russia's religious life consider that these themes formed the main content of anti-pagan literature of those days.[33]

Perhaps as a result of such social disorganization the Old-Slavonic Goddess of Love (Lada) was relegated into the background and obscurity. Instead, male gods of bacchanalian passion and Dionysiac orgy (Iarilo, Pereplut) became outstanding in folk imagination.[34] A phallic rite was observed at wedding banquets and sexual promiscuity during the feast gathering of young people became prominent, according to the old sermons.[35]

It was under these conditions of social disorganization and insecurity, and ascendency of power-oriented patriarchal system over the old stateless, semi-matriarchal and equalitarian order that the attitudes toward women changed radically. Mounting hostilities generated by conditions of strife and insecurity can be vented not only through inordinate sex life, alcoholism and delinquency, but also by aggressive behavior against all the unprotected and the weak. And just as sex life tended to take the form of lechery, and love that of uncontrolled passion, the attitudes toward the women changed from respect and reserve to that of scorn and contempt. They came to be looked upon as impure and unclean physically and morally.[36]

It is possible that the new unsatisfactory social conditions might have also affected the concept of the Christian God and attitude toward death. Not only did popular imagination in conditions of disorganization and insecurity tend to see in this

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178 771 God a wrathful, irate and revengeful Old Man, but the Church leaders themselves, affected by the conditions of their society, were inclined to emphasize the fear aspect of the Christian God rather than his love and compassion. They also tended to pre- [771] occupy themselves with death, describing it as a terror-striking event. In some early Church sermons even the messengers of God, the angels, were represented in a terrifying manner:

[776] Then, two angels appear, sent by God for the soul. As soon as the soul has seen them, it will be horrified; all its image and beauty and face will change; feet and hands will be torpid, and the hearing as with the tongue will be chained by silence; and man will be all sorrowful and invalid and woeful; and afterwards, appears death. And then, with a terrible pain the soul will issue from the body . . .[37]

793 776 152 These feelings of anxieties and fears, combined perhaps with a strong sense of guilt of the Church leaders, are manifested in the life histories of most Russian saints. These people, as portrayed in their hagiographies, were being constantly threatened by temptations and intimidations of dreadful demons. Hallucinations about demons became very frequent among the monks, and struggle against demons became one of the main aspects of ascetic life. Whole herds of these fiends were sometimes seen by the ascetics. The demons would disguise themselves as humans, as angels, and even as Christ, or they would appear in their true beastly form.[38]

773 Consistent with this gloomy and terrifying view of life and death was also an apocalyptic picture of the end of the world as pictured by Church leaders. According to the old Russian sermons the end of the world was very near and it was to ensue in fire and floods of blood brought about by a wrathful and revengeful God, (a picture that strongly reminds one of the vision of the end of the world found in the beliefs of the steppe nomads of Central Asia):

Then undying fire will flow from the East to the West, devouring mountains, stones, trees, and the sea. The firmament will be dried up and turned like brick bats, and all existing things, except men, will melt in a like way by the rate of the fire. All the earth will be burned; and through this undying fire all mankind has to pass.

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Like Jupiter, he only interfered in the affairs of mortals in moments of crisis. But when he did interfere it was no laughing matter, and everybody, from cellar to attic, trembled in his shoes . . .[20]

This God-like, unapproachable, inscrutable, absolute and arbitrary power of a stern and violent but also benevolent, compassionate and solicitous father was apparently projected into the Russian supernatural world in the form of the *Domovoy*, the house spirit. According to the Great-Russian folk beliefs, the Domovoy was the protector of the house; he had patriarchal prerogatives over it, but also depended upon it. He demanded from the family all kinds of honors. At the same time he was as unpredictable in his behavior as any stereotyped family head in the Great-Russian patriarchal family system.

Thus the Domovoy was at times protective, benevolent and compassionate, but at other times he would become wicked, vindictive and mischievous. He was endowed with supernatural powers and could bring either fortune or calamity upon the family, depending upon his frequently changing moods and dispositions. It was, therefore, considered wise to address him as "Grand Father" and to propitiate and appease him by frequent offerings in viands. If such attention were shown to him he was likely to be helpful. But if he were neglected, he would become enraged and full of wrathful vengeance. In such a case, he could be atoned only by blood; the corners of the izba were sprinkled with blood of a cock that was killed for the occasion and various incantations were uttered.[21]

8
FAMILY CONFLICTS

I

THE FATHER treated his family members as wards and minors because he was responsible for their well-being, their behavior and their salvation. He had to show a constant solicitude for them (*neustannaya zabota*). The blame for their

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592 Familycentrism, family isolation, and lack of trust in one's
771 neighbor were apparently projected into the supernatural world
776 where one's own Domovoy, though at times arbitrary, ill-tempered and spiteful, was generally considered to be benevolent—bringing good luck to the household which was under his care and solicitude. The neighbor's Domovoy, on the other hand, was always a malevolent and wicked being who could never be propitiated and who was likely to steal your hay or drive away your cattle for the benefit of the home which was under his protection.
[789] The Russian peasants, therefore, developed means of defense against the neighbor's Domovoy in the form of spells and exorcisms.

156 Lack of social trust is not favorable to the development of
621 solidarity within a community. Therefore lack of group identi-
578 fication among the peasants and burghers, the same as the lack of the *esprit de corps* among the nobility, contributed to the perpetuation of the autocratic rule. Lack of communal identifications was an obstacle to the turning of group hostilities against the ruling classes. In such circumstances a great deal of personal aggressiveness had to find outlets and targets within the local community and within the family circle itself. Only when the authorities suffered crushing defeat and loss of prestige the hostilities would turn against them and mass uprisings would take place, demanding re-establishment of old communal values.

With the ascendancy of the otsovskaya system, family relations came to be organized in a hierarchical system along the lines of paternity, marriage status, seniority and sex. At one time, only married male members formed the family council (soviet). The males had priority over the females. Within each sex category the elder had priority rights over the younger. When the family was partitioned, custom demanded that the older brothers leave
[428] the ancestral home while the youngest, following Mongol tradi-
[582] tions, remained on the paternal *koren* (root).[4] In marrying the daughters it was the eldest who had to be married first.

593 In the patriarchal family, in their relations to the father, all family members were expected to accept his rule with fear and awe (*strakh*) and with humility (*smirenie*). They had to show absolute submission and blind obedience (*besprekoslovnoe povinovenie*),[5] as well as love and gratitude (*blagodarnost*).[6]

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That image of God and attitudes toward him might be to a certain extent projections of social and political relations could be seen, for instance, in the *Hundred Chapters,* a practical code of several centuries of Russia's early Christian life. This code stresses the need for fear and awe of earthly powers as a way to train oneself in fear and awe of God. "A pupil fears the master's cudgel more than the master himself"; "After them (masters), bow your head with humility, before every rich man"; "Those who have received power and fortune from their Tsar require glory also from their friends and demand veneration from minors." "Bow your head to everybody senior to you . . . fear the prince with all your power . . . from him you will learn how to fear God. . . . Who does not fear the earthly lord, how will he fear Him whom he does not see." "With the fear of God, as with a bridle, restrain your mind, keeping a watch on yourself every hour."[7]

This tendency to project the fear of omnipotent earthly powers into the supernatural world persisted as long as the autocratic and despotic powers of the Father and of the Czar were perpetuated and as long as the Church identified itself with the state. Describing her confessor, a Russian princess said that: "His [the priest's] principles were exactly those of my uncle; he was an extreme monarchist representing God as absolute monarch of the universe, and identifying the ideas of religion with a kind of rigorous bureaucracy, controlling every detail of life."[8] The image of a demanding God giving nothing in return penetrated all the strata of Great-Russian society, the peasants and the merchants, as well as the nobility and the intelligentsia:

> *Nyanya* [nurse] was entrusted with my religious instruction . . . She thought God was just like the Czar, except that one lived in heaven and the other on earth. He was the most powerful of all beings and inclined to be stern rather than merciful. At any rate she always spoke of his severity and never of his goodness. "He'll teach you to behave yourself! He doesn't forgive people! He is pitiless when He is offended!" . . . The saints were of negligible importance in her eyes.[9]

Chaikovsky, the renowned Russian composer, had a similar idea of God as a fearful being: "I had toward Him (and even

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771 now my feelings have not changed) a feeling of wonder but at
•776 the same time also of fear. He created Heaven and earth. He too created me—and still even though I bow before Him, there is no love."[10] Michael Bakunin only elaborated on this basic popular concept of the Russian Orthodox God when he pictured the Lord as "God of vengeance and rage" who delights in eternal torturing of human beings and who is so "bloodthirsty and cruel" that he decided that his own son should be tortured and put to death by means of crucifixion.[11] A similar image of a self-seeking, dominating, arbitrary, and cruel God is found also
[538] in some Russian religious folk poems:

> Your gifts are not dear to me
> But dear to me are your souls.
> And I will be God above Gods,
> I will be Tzar above Tzars.
> And I will pick the apostles myself,
> And I will give them my mark,
> And I will give them my baptism.
> I will send them in all countries
> Who will receive them, will save himself
> And who does not, he will be tortured.[12]

Before such a God, like before the omnipotent earthly powers, there is nothing one can do but resign himself to his fate and await for God's decision at his *Strashny Sud* (Terrible Judgment). Thus when Fletcher asked a Russian Orthodox Bishop if he knew he was going to be saved the answer was that ". . . he knew not whether he should bee saved or no: but if God would *poshallovat* (take compassion on) him, or gratifie him so much as to save him, so it was, hee would be glad of it; if not what remedie?"[13] Such an image of an omnipotent, fierce and arbitrary God, the same as that of an all-powerful and harsh Father or Czar, might inspire humility, blind obedience and unconditional submissiveness; it might provoke also strong feelings of guilt, and a need for repentance and expiation of one's sins. Thus, next to fear, Russian religion emphasizes meekness and asceticism as a means of survival in the face of all-mighty and arbitrary powers.[14]

In this manner popular religious ideas and practices which

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that he might be rich and powerful in life.[6] For the same reason money was placed in the water when the child was bathed for the first time.[7]

In marriage customs the urge for power was expressed in certain activities performed during the marriage ritual and believed to contain magical properties that enabled either one or the other spouse to dominate. Also in the wedding party the bridegroom was called "knyaz" (prince) and his party "boyars"; an important part of the marriage ceremonies consisted in *velichat gostei,* that is in mutual glorification of the wedding guests.

The phrase *Kak vas velichat?*—how to glorify you?, which is employed when asking another person his name might indicate the same feelings. In early Russia personal names were formed by a combination of words which conveyed the image of rule, glory, power, holiness and destruction, such as Sviatoslav (the holy and glorious), Yaropolk (blazing power), Mstislav (the glory of revenge).

Another manifestation of power-seeking, mistrust and destructive aggression on the folk level is revealed, for instance, in attitudes toward women. The folk image of the woman is in remarkable contrast to the image of the mother. The derisive name for woman is *baba,* and baba is said "not to be a human being" (*Baba ne chelovek*), according to a proverb. Therefore mistreatment and abuse of women may be justified.[8] In the folk parlance distinction is made between *Krestyane* (Christians, peasants) and *zhenshchiny* (women). In the folk maxims women are pictured as immoral ("Three babas Sodom"), shameless ("A baba laughs where grandpa blushes"), more cunning than the devil ("Where the devil fails he sends a baba"), the cause of all man's troubles ("She was the cause of Adam's banishment"), and source of all evil ("We cannot expect any good from our rib").[9]

This folk concept of woman as an inferior being is found on all levels of Russian society. Comparatively few women have been admitted to the rank of saints in the Russian Church. Count Leo Tolstoy, a philosopher and novelist, who has been otherwise renowned for his ideas of Christian love, all-human brotherhood and an anarchic social and political equality, showed a great deal of misogynism. In his diary he pictures

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III

Just as in the ideology of Nihilism and Anarchism, revolt against degrading submission and rejection and demand for acceptance in some sects took the form of extreme power-seeking and self-deification. In the sect *Lyudi Bozhii* (people of God), for instance, the craving to become God incarnate or to have a live incarnation of Deity actually present in their midst was so strong that since the time of the sect's founder who claimed to be God Zebaoth (Sabaoth) a whole series of Christs came into being, succeeding one another by a sort of filiation or adoption. Finally each religious community of this sect boasted of having a flesh-and-blood Christ in its midst. They claimed that it was in each man's own power to unite himself to the Deity and to incarnate it in his own body. A woman had the faculty to become *Boginya* (the Goddess) or *Bogoroditsa* (Mother of God) and many women did achieve such self-apotheosis, adding to the number of divinities of each community.[19]

It was by means of suffering and mortification of flesh that candidates for Messiahship competed among themselves for this supreme achievement. These exploits were accompanied with self-glorification. In this way both power-seeking and identification with suffering were realized. The followers would watch for years to see which of the rival pretenders to Christhood underwent the greatest sufferings. The rivals for Godship, on the other hand, often resorted to trickery to prove their claims.[20] But once the issue was settled and a God-incarnate was recognized, the whole congregation owed Him supreme reverence and unconditional obedience which satisfied the contender's craving for power: "I am God, foretold of the prophets. There is no other God than I. Seek ye none other. Where unto ye are appointed, abide therein."[21] On the part of the congregation the desire for Christ-incarnate in their midst manifested a strong need for protective dependence and acceptance.

Hence longing for a world in which truth and justice, kindness and love would reign, in which there would be no abusive serfdom, no subservience, tortures and sufferings, but happi-